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MBDA Links Minority Businesses with \$5 Billion In Forecasted Public and Private Contracts to Rebuild the Gulf

MBDA Hosts Its Second Business to Business Linkage Forum in Biloxi, MS on July 25

WASHINGTON, DC—The Minority Business Development Agency, U.S. Department of Commerce, hosted its second Business-to-Business (B2B) Linkage Forum on July 24th - 25th at the Imperial Hotel in Biloxi, MS. Over 125 minority-owned firms representing all parts of the U.S. including the Gulf coast region came to learn about public and private contract opportunities.

“Rebuilding the Gulf Coast is a high priority for the President and the Nation,” said Ronald N. Langston, MBDA National Director, who kicked off the event with a welcome reception Monday evening. “The Minority Business Development Agency is encouraging joint ventures and strategic alliances between smaller minority-owned firms in the states of Mississippi and Louisiana to partner with larger minority businesses from across the U.S. to bid on forecasted opportunities to rebuild the Gulf Coast.”

Achieving similar success to the B2B Forum in New Orleans, MBDA's Biloxi B2B Forum provided attendees a very structured opportunity to network and develop partnerships throughout the day. By requiring advance registration, MBDA Business Development Specialists reviewed the capabilities of each firm and the forecasted opportunities to prepare a “must-meet” list for each company. An opportunity for ad hoc networking was also provided.

“It was a great networking experience and gave me an opportunity to meet prime contractors,” said Kenny Hunter of Tri-County Contractors in Jackson, MS and a MBDA client.
“It was informative and just a good environment for small businesses.”

During the B2B Forum, \$5 billion worth of forecasted procurement opportunities in the areas of housing and construction for rebuilding the Gulf Coast were presented by public and private agencies, including the Army Corps of Engineers, Northrop Grumman, City of Biloxi, NASA-Stennis Space Center and Veterans Affairs. Representatives commented on the many qualified minority businesses who attended that could meet the contract requirements.

“Since Hurricane Katrina, the Mississippi Development Authority (MDA) has been working tirelessly to support the Mississippi Gulf Coast in the rebuilding process,” said Leland Speed, executive director of MDA. “This forum is another resource to help minority businesses compete more effectively in the marketplace.”

The B2B Forum was sponsored by MBDA in partnership with the Mississippi Development Authority – Minority Business Enterprise Division, Kauffman Foundation – Urban Entrepreneurial Partnership and the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA).

“UEP is proud to co-host with MBDA for the B2B forum,” said Daryl Williams of the Director of Minority Entrepreneurship for the Kauffman Foundation and National Director of the Urban Entrepreneur Partnership. “The B2B Linkage Forum is a critical component to help the capacity of minority businesses affected by the Katrina and Rita.”

To learn more about the MBDA’s Gulf Rebuilding Initiative, visit the Agency’s website at www.mbda.gov/gulf.

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About the Minority Business Development Agency, U.S. Department of Commerce

The Minority Business Development Agency, part of the U.S. Department of Commerce, is the only federal agency created specifically to foster the establishment and growth minority-owned businesses in America. MBDA is an entrepreneurially focused and innovative organization committed to wealth creation in minority communities. Guided by its mission, MBDA actively promotes the growth and competitiveness of large, medium and small minority business enterprises (MBEs). Useful statistics on minority businesses and resources to build and sustain minority businesses are available at www.mbda.gov.